



WEEK 2
REMOVE: A GOLDEN CALF
DEUTERONOMY 9:15-24

REVIEW

What were some of the key things you took from today's message?

REFLECT

Do you want a deeper relationship with God? Is that something that you truly long for?

What are some things that you sometimes put ahead of your relationship with God?

How do those things keep you from having a good relationship with God?

How do you identify whether something is an idol in your life?

How have your relationships with others distracted you from God in the past? Do you have any relationships now that encourage you to follow things other than God?

Do you ever struggle to trust God? Where are the areas that you struggle most in your faith?

How do you think a lack of contentment keeps you from following God?

Are there any areas in your life where you have trouble obeying what God wants and has asked from your life?

Has the Spirit revealed to you over the last few weeks some things that you need to remove to be closer to God?

When Moses saw what had happened with the idol in the people of Israel's life, he crushed it and threw it away. Many times, we crush our idols, but we don't completely dispose of them. The danger in that is obvious. We will still have the materials needed to rebuild the idols if the desire to worship them again comes. How do you ensure that you have disposed of sin in your life?

RESPOND

How do we grow in a joy-giving habit of repentance? Read Psalm 51, written by David after the prophet Nathan confronted him with his sin. Here are eight steps to guide you in repentance:

1. Define the sin.

The first step to meaningful confession is understanding what sin is. David uses three different words for it in Psalm 51 – Iniquity, sin and transgressions (vv.1-3). Each term has been deliberately chosen for its unique meaning. "Transgression" is rebellion against God's authority and law. "Iniquity" is a distortion of what should be. "Sin" is missing the mark. David also says his sin is deep – there is no minimizing or excusing it.

2. Appeal to God's mercy.

The psalm begins, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love" (v. 1). Here, David appeals for forgiveness based on what he knows about God's character – that He is merciful. David knows God is committed to him in a relationship of "unfailing love," and when we come before God in repentance, we do so because of His covenant with us through Christ.

3. Avoid defensiveness and see God rightly.

David's sin hurt multiple people. He committed adultery, orchestrated a murder and tried to cover it all up. And yet, he says to God, "Against you – you alone – I have sinned" (v. 4). How can that be? Sin is missing the mark – God's mark. Our sin does hurt others, and we must seek forgiveness from them. Ultimately, though, all sin is against God.

4. Look to Jesus.

David writes, "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean" (v. 7). He knows hyssop signifies purification with blood (Exodus 24), and he knows that blood alone can make him clean. What he doesn't know is exactly how this will be done. But we do. We have the full revelation of Jesus, who "has appeared once and for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

5. Ask God to break and heal you.

David prays, "Let the bones you have crushed rejoice" (v.8). When God reveals our sin to us, it's painful. It's never pleasant to confront just how unholy we are. But like a doctor resetting a fractured bone, it is God who breaks, God who sets and God who heals.

6. Be comforted by the Spirit.

Next David prays, "Do not...take your Holy Spirit from me" (v. 11). But the fact that David is grieved over his sin is a sign that the Spirit is at work in him. Have you ever been so discouraged by your sin that you've wondered, "How can God love me? Surely I'm not really a Christian." Take comfort in knowing that the grief you're experiencing is a sign that you have the Holy Spirit working in you, causing you to hate what God hates.

7. Rejoice and proclaim truth.

In verses 12-15, David asks God to make him so joyful about his salvation that he can't help but proclaim the gospel to others. "Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare Your praise." This is important because so often we do the opposite. We wallow in our sin and draw back from serving others, because we think we're unworthy. But the joy of forgiveness should compel us to share the good news with friends, family, co-workers and neighbors.

8. Resolve to obey.

We can do all the steps above, but if we're planning to sin in the same way again, the grace isn't truly taking root. What God desires is the mark of true repentance – a heart that is "broken" by sin and truly "contrite." As Puritan Pastor Thomas Watson wrote, "'Til sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet." If we come to God with a heart set on obedience, He "will not despise" it because of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (v. 17).

Practicing this kind of repentance leads to deep joy, as we learn to hate our sin and love our Savior more. It also leads us to open up with others, not seeking to hide our sin, but enlisting others to pray for us and build a community that fights our sin together. Like David, it's our joy to tell others of God's grace and forgiveness, depending on Christ each step of the way.